



Child Safety Policy

Minimum Standards

At Yea Primary School we offer the variety of a large school within the nurturing and safe environment of a small school. Our flexible learning space is designed to support students develop literacy and numeracy skills. We offer an exciting variety of programs to promote life long learning. Our 3 school rules of Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible form the basis of our social skills program and general student wellbeing.

In support of this at Yea Primary School, we have a zero tolerance to child abuse.

RATIONALE

All Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

- the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- the actions the school proposes to take to:
 - ✓ demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its Child Safe Policy;
 - ✓ support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
 - ✓ support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
 - ✓ ensure that child safety is considered in the recruitment, selection and management of staff (includes contractors and volunteers).

Ministerial Order No. 870 (available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes) states that child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving:
 - ✓ A sexual offence or
 - ✓ An offence under section 49 B (2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - ✓ Physical violence or
 - ✓ Serious emotional or psychological harm
- Serious neglect of a child.

Implementation

Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Reporting a belief

Mandated staff members (*Teachers and Principals*) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection.

Staff members, **whether or not mandated**, need to report to the principal or assistant principal their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties.



A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report.

Please refer to the Yea PS Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.

These procedures do not:

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

- Risk management strategies have been developed within the following Yea Primary School policies:
 - *Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures*
 - *Student Engagement Policy*
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the Department Mandatory Reporting online Professional Development
- Ensure that the staff selection checklist is followed before any staff member is offered employment.
- Provide a safe environment that staff can discuss their child safety concerns with the Principal.

If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
- At least annually, the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school staff about:
 - ✓ individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
 - ✓ child abuse risks in the school environment; and
 - ✓ the school's current child safety standards.

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

- The school authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
 - ✓ standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
 - ✓ healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
 - ✓ resilience.



- The school must promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

A Child Safety Code of Conduct

To promote child safety in the school environment we acknowledge the following:

All students have a right to:

- Learn and socialise without interference or intimidation in a safe and secure environment.
- Be treated with respect and fairness as individuals.
- Expect a learning program that meets their individual needs
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness.
- Have learning continued without disruption in a supportive environment.
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity.
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.
- To be safe in every aspect of daily life at school, including Outside School Hours Programs and after school sporting clinics.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Contribute to a positive learning environment, by listening, working cooperatively, staying on task and contributing in a constructive manner.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others.
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school rules.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.

All staff, volunteers and Council members are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Yea Primary School's Child Safe Policy at all times;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- treating everyone with respect;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification);
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the principal or assistant principal and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection;



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- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area);
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate);
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters) ;
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Reference

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	7 th February 2022
Approved by	Principal and School Council 7 th February 2022
Next scheduled review date	11 th November 2025